II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-4, 6-22 and 24-25 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Page 2 of the Office Action rejects claims 1-25 under 35 U.S.C. '103 as being unpatentable over Peter et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,893,098 (Hereinafter "Peters") in view of Farley et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,257,185 (Hereinafter "Farley").

Farley discloses an expert or knowledge system to be applied to interactive learning, information retrieval and problem solving by using a computer, having a cross-reference structure in which the end user is provided with options for diverting to another category or another question in accordance with his selection among the responses presented by the system before answering the question (column 4, lines 34-37;column 10, lines 32-48). Farley teaches that a variety of responses for a question are defined in advance, and the relationships and linkages are registered into a table of the knowledge system (column 39, lines 14-24).

Claim 1 recites, "storage means for storing data for a fixed form reply, stored separately from the message . . . "

Page 2 of the action states, "Peter does not specifically disclose that the message and the reply data are stored separately. However, Farley, in the same area of managing an electronic message and a reply to the message, teaches to store a reply data separately from a message (Question) (column 10 line 48-50)."

The cited portion of Farley, column 10, lines 48-50, states, "Challenger activity, e.g., the questions and the user responses, is stored individually by session and retrievable at any time."

However, this cited portion of Farley actually indicates that the questions and responses are stored together. "Stored individually" means that the combination of questions and respective answers are stored individually so that the combination can be accessed later. For example, see Farley, column 11, line 29, which states, "This is to allow a manager to electronically review and comment on a subordinate's work session." The session includes both the questions and their respective answers, which are stored individually by session. However, the questions and their respective answers are actually not stored separately. This is so that later on, a manager or supervisor can pull up the session and immediately view the questions and respective answers.

Therefore, Farley does not disclose that the questions and answers are stored separately.

Page 3 of the Action states, "At the time of the invention, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have modified the electronic system of Peter by storing the reply data

separately from the message, as taught by Farley. The suggestion of doing so would have allowed a user to retrieve and display the message and question together quickly, and would have been helpful for the user. (See column 10 line 56-69, Farley)."

In response, the Applicant submits that the motivation of allowing a user to retrieve and display the message and question together quickly would suggest storing the message and question, together, but not separately. Storing them together would allow easier and quicker retrieval. One motivation for storing them separately, as discusses in the previously filed Amendment, is that it saves a person the effort of having to individually create replies. Therefore, the motivation cited by the Examiner actually teaches away from the creation of the present invention, and is not a proper motivation to combine.

Further, the Applicant submits that the combination of Peter and Farley do not suggest the present invention. Since Farley does not store answer data separately from the questions, Farley does not add anything to Peter to help suggest the present invention. There is still no suggestion in either of the cited references to "store data for a fixed form reply, stored separately from the message" as claimed.

Independent claims 7, 9, 13, 17, and 21, in view of the above remarks, are also not suggested by the cited references.

In view of the above remarks, withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 5 AND 23 UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Page 16 of the Office Action rejects claims 5 and 23 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Peters and Farley and further in view of Ginter et al., U.S. Patent No. 5,982,891 (Hereinafter "Ginter").

Claims 5 and 23 are dependent upon claims 1 and 21, which for the reasons set forth in section III of this Amendment should be allowed over the prior art. Therefore, withdrawal of the rejections of claims 5 and 23 is respectfully requested.

V. CONCLUSION

In view of the above, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

If any further fees are required by the submission of this Amendment, please charge same to deposit account no. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS:

None of the claims are amended below. Nevertheless, for the convenience of the Examiner, all the pending claims are reproduced below.

1. (AS TWICE AMENDED) An electronic news system for managing an electronic message and a reply to said message, comprising:

storage means for storing data for a fixed form reply, stored separately from the message;

output means for outputting said data for a reply; and

control means for accepting a selection out of the outputted data for a reply as the reply to the message.

2. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 1, further comprising:

fixed form reply managing means for managing a plurality of fixed form replies by data for respectively specifying said plurality of replies, and

totaling means for totaling a number of the selections of each of fixed form replies as the reply to the message, and storing results of the totalization of each of fixed form replies to the message in relation to said specifying data.

3. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 1, wherein said control means has means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message, and managing the inputted free form reply in relation to data to specify said message.

4. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 2, wherein said control means has means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message, and managing the inputted free form reply in relation to data to specify said message.

5. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 1, wherein said data for a fixed form reply is one kind or the combination of plural kinds of data selected from a plurality of kinds including text, still picture, speech, sound and moving pictures.

6. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 1, wherein said control means includes means for causing said output means to output data for a fixed form reply of the kind which fits contents of the message.

7. (AS TWICE AMENDED) an electronic news system including a client apparatus and a server apparatus which manages an electronic message and a reply to said message transmitted from the client apparatus, said client apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing data for a fixed form reply, stored separately from the message;

output means for outputting said data for a reply;

control means for accepting a selection out of the outputted data for a reply as the reply to the message; and

communication control means for transmitting the selection to the server apparatus.

8. (AS UNAMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 7, wherein the client apparatus comprises means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message in said control means, and the server apparatus comprises free form reply managing means for managing the free form reply transmitted from the client apparatus in relation to data for specifying said message.

9. (AS TWICE AMENDED) An electronic news system including a client apparatus and a server apparatus which manages electronic messages transmitted from the client apparatus, comprising:

said server apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing data for a fixed form reply, stored separately from the electronic messages;

communication control means for transmitting said data for a reply to the client apparatus;

said client apparatus comprising:

receiving control means for receiving said data for a reply sent from the server apparatus;

output means for outputting the received data for a reply;

control means for accepting the selection out of the outputted data for a reply as the reply to the message; and

transmission control means for controlling the transmission for transmitting the selected reply to the server apparatus.

10. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 9, wherein the client apparatus comprises fixed form reply managing means for managing a plurality of fixed form replies by data for respectively specifying said plurality of replies, and communication control means for transmitting specifying data of the selected reply to the server apparatus as a reply, and the server apparatus comprises communication control means for receiving the specifying data transmitted from the client apparatus as a reply, and totaling means for totaling a number of the selections of each reply as the reply to the message based on said specifying data, and storing the results of the totalization of each reply to said message in relation said specifying data.

11. (AS UNAMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 9, wherein the client apparatus comprises means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message in said control means, and the server apparatus comprises free form reply managing means for managing free form reply transmitted from the client apparatus in relation to data for specifying said message.

12. (AS UNAMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 10, wherein the client apparatus comprises means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message in said control means, and the server apparatus comprises free form reply managing means for managing the free form reply transmitted from the client apparatus in relation to data for specifying said message.

13. (AS THREE TIMES AMENDED) An electronic news system including a client apparatus and a server apparatus which manages an electronic message and a reply to said message transmitted from the client apparatus,

said server apparatus comprising:

storage means for storing data for a first fixed form reply, stored separately from the message;

communication control means for transmitting the data for the first fixed form reply to tile client apparatus,

said client apparatus comprising:

receiving control means for receiving the first data for the first fixed form reply sent from the server apparatus;

storage means for storing data for second fixed form reply, stored separately from the message;

output means for outputting data for the first or second fixed form reply;

control means for accepting a selection out of the outputted data for the first fixed form reply based on the category of the message as the reply to the message; and

means for controlling the transmission for transmitting the selected reply out of the data for the first or second fixed form reply to the server apparatus.

14. (AS ONCE AMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 13, wherein the server apparatus comprises fixed form reply managing means for managing a plurality of first fixed form replies with data for respectively specifying said replies, and means for transmitting the specifying data of the first fixed form reply to the client apparatus along with said reply,

the client apparatus comprises fixed form reply managing means for managing a plurality of second fixed form replies with the data for respectively specifying said replies, and means for causing said transmission controlling means to transmit the selected second reply or the selected specifying data of the first reply to the server apparatus as a reply,

said server apparatus further comprises means for transmitting specifying data of the second fixed form reply to the client apparatus, and means for receiving the second reply or specifying data of the first reply transmitted from the client apparatus as a reply in said communication control means, and totaling means for totaling a number of the selections of each reply as the reply to the message based on said specifying data, and storing the results of the totalization of each reply to said message in relation said specifying data,

said client apparatus further comprises means for receiving the specifying data of the second fixed form reply sent from the server apparatus in said receiving control means, and means for outputting the stored second fixed form reply based on said specifying data in said output means.

15. (AS UNAMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 13, wherein

the client apparatus comprises means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message in said control means, and the server apparatus comprises free form reply managing means for managing the free form reply transmitted from the client apparatus in relation to data for specifying said message.

16. (AS UNAMENDED) An electronic news system according to claim 14, wherein the client apparatus comprises means for accepting an input of a free form reply to the message in said control means, and the server apparatus comprises free form reply managing means for managing the free form reply transmitted from the client apparatus in relation to the data for specifying said message.

17. (AS TWICE AMENDED) A recording medium readable by a computer which manages an electronic message and a reply to said message, comprising:

program code means for causing said computer to store data for a fixed form reply in said computer, the fixed form reply being stored separately from the message;

program code means for causing said computer to output said data for a reply; and

program code means for causing said computer to accept a selection out of the outputted data for a reply as the reply to said message.

18. (AS ONCE AMENDED) A recording medium according to claim 17, further comprising:

program code means for causing said computer to manage a plurality of fixed form replies with data for respectively specifying said replies; and

program code means for causing said computer to total a number of the selections of each reply as the reply to the message and store the results of totaling the totalization of each reply to said messages in relation to said specifying data.

19. (AS ONCE AMENDED) A recording medium according to claim 17, further comprising:

program code means for causing said computer to accept an input of a free form reply to the message; and

program code means for causing said computer to manage the inputted free form reply in relation to data for specifying said message.

20. (AS ONCE AMENDED) A recording medium according to claim 18, further comprising:

program code means for causing said computer to accept an input of the free form reply to the message; and

program code means for causing said computer to manage the inputted free form reply in relation to data for specifying said message.

21. (AS ONCE AMENDED) A message system comprising:

a reply data storage device storing a plurality of fixed form reply sets, each fixed form reply set containing a plurality of replies;

a controller receiving a message from a host and allowing a user to select a reply from a fixed form reply set stored in the reply data storage device;

an output device outputting the selected reply to the host,

wherein the fixed form reply sets are stored separately from the message.

22. (AS UNAMENDED) The message system as recited in claim 21 wherein, the controller selects a fixed form reply set based on a category of the message.

23. (AS UNAMENDED) The message system as recited in claim 21 wherein, the reply sets can include video or audio data.

24. (AS UNAMENDED) The message system as recited in claim 21 wherein, the host receives a plurality of the outputted selected fixed form replies and displays a bar graph illustrating a frequency of responses.

25. (AS ONCE AMENDED) A computer readable storage medium storing a computer program instructing a computer to perform:

storing a plurality of fixed form reply sets, each fixed form reply set containing a plurality of replies;

storing a message separately from the fixed form reply sets;

receiving the message from a host;

selecting a fixed form reply set;

allowing a user to choose a reply from the selected fixed form reply set;

sending the chosen reply to the host; and

computing the frequency of chosen replies sent to the host.